THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) One.

(b) March, 2008.

(c) The policy adopted for taking up gauge conversion to carry out the conversion of lines at least cost yet providing a standard of service not lower than what the rail users were getting on the Metre Gauge covering the following areas:

(i) To take up conversion of lines to develop alternative broad gauge (BG) routes obviating the need for doubling existing BG lines on these routes,

(ii) To establish new BG links between stations connected by other BG lines.

(iii) To establish BG connection to ports, industrial centres and locations having potential for growth.

(iv) To take up conversion of lines required on strategic considerations.

(v) To minimize transshipment and to improve wagons turn around by avoiding delays at transshipment points.

Many new line and gauge conversion projects have been taken up on socioeconomic considerations for development of backward, hilly, remote and under developed areas.

Connecting Lumbini by train

2111. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the action taken by his Ministry to connect Lumbini, the Birth Place of Lord Buddha by train;

(b) what action taken by his Ministry on letter dated 18th May, 2006 from M.P: Rajya Sabha; and

(c) whether the External Affairs Ministry had called for the comments of his Ministry on the above matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Lumbini is in Nepal and not connected by Indian Railway system.. Five surveys which have been conducted on behalf of Ministry of External Affairs, to have rail connectivity on bordering towns of Indo-Nepal border do not cover Lumbini. The matter has been referred to Ministry of External Affairs for their comments.

Captive power plant

2112. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN:
MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the average annual requirement of electricity of the Railways;